

# THE CONTINUING TSUNAMI:

## 1989 in Merton Scholarship & Publication

by **Robert E. Daggy**

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David D. Cooper — in the only major book published about Merton in 1989, *Thomas Merton's Art of Denial: The Evolution of a Radical Humanist* — says that in recent years “a near-tsunami of biographies, critical analyses, reminiscences, primary source materials, reprints, and ephemeral bric-a-brac have spilled over the floodgates of Merton studies.” He goes on to say: “Even more books and collections have been launched upstream.”<sup>1</sup> I would probably change the imagery here to accord with the Japanese conception of tidal waves rising from the ocean floor by saying that, in 1989, even more Merton materials have welled to the surface. It may not have been a flood, but more than a trickle of material has been published.

1989 saw the culmination of the various events commemorating and celebrating the twentieth anniversary of Merton's death in 1968 in The First General Meeting of *The International Thomas Merton Society* (titled “The Pattern in the Seed: Thomas Merton's Glimpse of the Cosmic Dance”), held at Bellarmine College in Louisville and the Abbey of Gethsemani from 25 to 28 May. The program at this meeting, the largest conference yet held on Merton, included a presidential address (William H. Shannon), five general session talks (James Conner, O.C.S.O.; Robert Giroux; Robert Hale, O.S.B. Cam.; Paul Marechal; and Mary Luke Tobin, S.L.); papers and presentations by thirty-four Merton scholars and writers; and music and dance performances (Lee Brunner, G. Philip Koonce, and the Richard Sisto Jazz Quartet). No

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1. David D. Cooper, *Thomas Merton's Art of Denial: The Evolution of a Radical Humanist* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1989), p. ix. Hereafter referred to in the text as Cooper.

plan for gathering the various talks and papers into a "Proceedings" has developed, but several have been published. Five — those by James Conner, Sidney H. Griffith, Michael W. Higgins, Douglas R. Letson, and Karl A. Plank — are included in this *Merton Annual*. Robert Giroux's keynote address, "The Seven Storey Mountain: The Making of a Spiritual Classic," was basically the same text as his "Editing *The Seven Storey Mountain*" in *America* (22 October 1988). William H. Shannon's presidential address, "The Farmer from Nelson County," and the two homilies given at Masses by Flavian Burns, O.C.S.O., and Paul J. McGuire, S.C.J., appeared in the Summer 1989 issue of *The Merton Seasonal*. Elena Malits's "The Meaning of *The Seven Storey Mountain*" will appear in the Winter 1990 issue of *The Seasonal* and David D. Cooper's "Merton's Letters to Literary Figures" in the Spring 1990 issue of *Katallagete*. Additional papers from the First General Meeting may be included in *The Merton Annual IV*.

The bulk of Merton publication in 1989, however, was not generated by the many 1988 commemorations and the ITMS General Meeting. In looking at the year as a whole certain things stand out: 1) the appearance of a significant amount of previously unpublished or obscurely published Merton material; 2) the reprinting of several Merton texts (at least one of which was modestly revised); 3) an upsurge (perhaps resurgence is better) of Merton publication in England; 4) an impressive amount of participation in Merton studies by Canadians; 5) the introduction of some less explored topics in shorter writings about Merton; and 6) the publication of an inevitable number of reminiscences and what Cooper terms "ephemeral bric-a-brac."

Two books and three articles presented previously unpublished Merton writings. The second volume of the Merton correspondence was published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux in August: *The Road to Joy: Letters to New and Old Friends*; selected and edited by Robert E. Daggy. This volume, intended as a celebration of the lasting friendships in Merton's life, is divided into five sections: I. To Mark Van Doren; II. To Family and Family Friends; III. Circular Letters to Friends; IV. To Some Special Friends (Mahanambrata Brahmachari), Seymour Freedgood, John Howard Griffin, Robert Lax, Sister Therese Lentfoehr, Thomasine O'Callaghan, Beatrice Olmstead and Family, Ad Reinhardt, Edward Rice, Saint Bonaventure Friends, John H. Slate, Daniel Clark Walsh); and V. To and About Young People. *The Road to Joy* is reviewed in this volume by Sister Jane Marie Richardson.

Walter H. Capps edited (from a tape transcription) and introduced Merton's remarks delivered at the Center for the Study of Democratic

Institutions in Santa Barbara, California, on 3 October 1968. Titled *Preview of the Asian Journey*, it was published by Crossroad. The remarks were made only days before Merton left for Asia and the basic text gives insight into what he thought he might do while there and certain inklings as to what he thought he might do when he returned. Two essays — “The Sacred City” and “The Wild Places” — which appeared in *The Center Magazine* are included, but they have appeared elsewhere and neither enlarge upon nor bear on the remarks themselves. Bonnie Bowman Thurston reviews the book in this *Annual*.

Brother Patrick Hart continued his serialized edition of Merton’s “St. Aelred of Rievaulx and the Cistercians” with a fifth instalment in the first number of *Cistercian Studies* for 1989. Two early letters of Merton’s, written during his undergraduate days at Columbia, were offered for sale this year. They were published in the Autumn issue of *The Merton Seasonal* under the title “Thomas Merton and Alfred B. Hailparn: Two Recently Discovered Letters Concerning the 1937 *Columbian*.” Merton was editor-in-chief of the yearbook and the letters deal primarily with yearbook activities, documenting as well Merton’s well-known fondness for beer. *The Merton Annual II* featured three articles by Merton which were new to readers of English. “Answers for Hernan Lavin Cerda: On War, Technology and the Intellectual” and “Letter to a Poet about Vallejo” had previously appeared only in Spanish translations. “List of Works submitted for the Approval of the Most Reverend Fathers Capitular, O.C.S.O, Meeting at Citeaux, May 1946,” written by Merton in French, was translated by William H. Shannon and gives clues to Merton’s writing and projects in the mid to late 1940s.

A number of writings and projects, though not from the 1940s, were reprinted during 1989. New Directions issued a trade edition called *Thomas Merton in Alaska: Prelude to The Asian Journal: The Alaskan Conferences, Journals, and Letters*. This edition, available in both hardcover and paperback, included the journal and letters and retained the introduction by Robert E. Daggy and preface by David D. Cooper which constituted the limited edition, *The Alaskan Journal of Thomas Merton*, published by Turkey Press in 1988. Eight of the conferences which Merton gave in Alaska (previously published in *Sisters Today* and *The Priest*) were added. Abbess Diane Foster reviews this new edition in *The Annual*.

Unicorn Press which had originally published *Introductions East and West: The Foreign Prefaces of Thomas Merton*; edited by Robert E. Daggy, in 1981, decided to allow this edition to go out of print. (As an aside, the death of Teo Savory in November 1989 ended a long tradition of Merton

publishing stretching back to the days when Merton himself first published in *The Unicorn Journal*.) This text was slightly revised by the addition of three more "foreign prefaces" and seven letters on proposed translations of Merton books. It was published by Crossroad under the new title of "*Honorable Reader*": *Reflections on My Work*, a title taken from the Preface to the Japanese edition of *The Seven Storey Mountain*, where Merton says in the closing paragraph: "Therefore, most honorable reader, it is not as an author that I would speak to you, not as a story-teller, not as a philosopher, not as a friend only: I seek to speak to you, in some way, as your own self."<sup>2</sup> Michael Downey reviews the book in this volume.

Most people familiar with Merton are aware that he decided in 1967 that he would edit his own "underground" magazine, filling it with prose and poetry contributed by his friends and "friends of friends." He called it *Monks Pond* and edited four issues, all of which appeared in 1968. The fourth and last issue was completed after his departure for Asia and in it Merton indicated that there would be no more: "So the pond has frozen over — as planned."<sup>3</sup> It was produced at the Abbey of Gethsemani and the four issues themselves are rare items. It is unclear how many of each issue were actually printed. In order to make this hard-to-find Merton item available to a larger public, it was decided to "unfreeze the pond" and issue a facsimile edition. *Monks Pond: Thomas Merton's "Little Magazine"*, edited by Robert E. Daggy, was published by the University Press of Kentucky. Brother Patrick Hart supplied an afterword. Jonathan Greene, Kentucky poet and one of the original contributors to *Monks Pond*, reviews it in this *Annual*.

Barry Magid has printed a limited edition of one hundred copies of Merton's translation of *Dialogue about the Hidden God*, by Nicholas of Cusa. Magid points out in his brief introduction that Merton's interest in Nicholas never developed beyond this translation. It has appeared, before this edition, only in *The Lugano Review* (1966) and has not been collected in any editions of Merton's writings. Doubleday and Company, a house quick to remainder their books and send them into out-of-print status, has apparently grasped that interest in Merton is swelling rather than receding and has reprinted four Merton titles in paperback (with new covers and, as one

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2. Thomas Merton, "*Honorable Reader*": *Reflections on My Work*; edited with an introd. by Robert E. Daggy (New York: Crossroad, 1989), p. 67.

3. *Monks Pond: Thomas Merton's "Little Magazine"*; edited with an introd. by Robert E. Daggy; afterword by Brother Patrick Hart (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1989), p. 212.

might expect, higher prices): *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, *Contemplative Prayer*, and *A Thomas Merton Reader*.

Finally, among primary Merton materials, the continuing wave of Merton's taped lectures published by Credence Cassettes must be mentioned. Ten more tapes (approximately twenty lectures), under the headings "Prayer" and "Mysticism," were issued on cassette in 1989. The tapes on "Mysticism" are re-edited versions of tapes published originally in the Electronic Paperbacks *Mystic Life* series and are, of course, Merton's lectures on Sufism. Dewey Weiss Kramer examines the entire "Second Series" of *The Merton Tapes* in a review-essay included in this volume.

The "upsurge" of interest in Merton in England is due in no small part to the conferences, seminars, and retreats instigated by William H. Shannon and several English confreres in the last few years. Shannon's "Study Week" at Clare College, Cambridge University (where Merton attended one year before being rusticated to the United States), has helped in prompting Clare to acknowledge Merton as one of their more prominent matriculators. The English Mertonites have organized themselves into *The International Thomas Merton Society (European Chapter)* with The Reverend Canon A. M. Allchin as President, The Reverend Arthur Middleton as Vice President, and The Reverend Stephen J. Hotchen as General Secretary. Middleton's address, "The World in a Grain of Sand," delivered at one of the Merton conferences, appeared in *The Merton Annual II*. The group is in the midst of developing a newsletter, an English version of *The Merton Seasonal*, with the title *New Seeds*. John F. X. Harriott's remarks in *The Tablet* in November 1988 indicated that interest in Merton has reached England. He said:

Supposing the bets could be collected, which of this century's prophets and sages would a gambler back to show the greatest staying power? . . . My own money, however improbably, would be on an American monk who lived most of his life in a Kentucky monastery and much of that in a small hermitage, who rarely travelled outside its boundaries and was professionally dedicated to silence and solitude: the Trappist, Thomas Merton . . . . Out of that silence and solitude spoke an authentically twentieth-century voice, articulating with power and grace this century's fevers and frets and, with growing confidence, their relief and remedy.<sup>4</sup>

Another indication of renewed interest in Merton came early in the year when Monica Furlong, known for her well-received *Merton: A Biography* (1980), re-entered the Merton arena after statements that she had

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4. John F. X. Harriott, "A Man for Our Time," *The Tablet* 242 (26 November 1988), p. 1354.

"done" Merton and was getting on to other things. She contributed two articles, drawn from her basic research — and premise — for the biography, to *The Tablet*. Titled "Thomas Merton Reconsidered: A Monk and His Abbot" and "A Prophet Reassessed," they appeared in the 28 January and 4 February issues. Furlong also contributed an introduction for the short volume, *The Shining Wilderness: Daily Readings with Thomas Merton*, edited by Aileen Taylor and published by Darton, Longman & Todd. This and the even shorter *Thomas Merton on Prayer*, compiled and edited by Tony Castle and published by Marshall Pickering, constitute two unique "English" publications. They are reviewed in this *Annual* by Donald Allchin, President of the English ITMS. Marshall Pickering, under its Pickering and Lamp Press imprints, has been most forward among English houses in publication of Merton and Merton-related material. A *Thomas Merton Reader* has been published and *The Hidden Ground of Love: Letters on Religious Experience and Social Concerns* and *The Road to Joy: Letters to New and Old Friends* are in preparation. They have issued William H. Shannon's *Thomas Merton's Dark Path* as well as a Merton-inspired book (what I call a "Merton spin-off") by an English Franciscan, Brother Ramon. This book, titled *Soul Friends: A Journey with Thomas Merton*, is about Brother Ramon's encounter with Merton in his own life and he weaves Merton's biography into his own life story. Late in the year Collins brought out two books in their Fount Paperbacks series, the first an edition of "Honorable Reader" using only the American subtitle, *Reflections on My Work*, as the title. The second was another Merton "spin-off," Melvyn Matthews's *The Hidden Journey: Reflections on a Dream by Thomas Merton*. Matthews, Director of the Ammerdown Centre for Study and Renewal, uses Merton's account of a dream in *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* as the springboard for this book on prayer and understanding ourselves.

Nicholas Dunne has written an article about Merton's last trip which appeared in *The Catholic Herald* in London in 1988 and was reprinted in 1989 under the title "Thomas Merton's Final Journey" in *Catholic Asian News*, published in Singapore. Many of the Englishpersons interested in Merton are, in fact, Anglicans and that connection in Merton's life was explored by Terry Tastard, an Anglican Franciscan, in "Anglicanism and Thomas Merton," published in the London journal *Theology*. Earlier in the year (6 February) the BBC broadcast a somewhat unsatisfying play by Bruce Stewart called *Me and My Shadow*, the title taken from the 1927 hit song by Al Jolson, Billy Rose and Dave Dreyer which pulsatingly punctuated this strangely non-spiritual account of Merton's life. But what the play indi-

cates, along with the various publications, is that the English are claiming Merton, who did after all receive much of his education in England and undoubtedly thought of himself as at least partially English, as one of their own.

On the other side of the Atlantic but still from the British Commonwealth, work by Canadians remains significant in Merton studies. The Reverend Frank A. Peake's "Self, Sexuality and Solitude in John Cassian and Thomas Merton: Notes from a Retreat" was featured in *The Merton Annual II*. Four Canadians participated in the First General Meeting of the ITMS — Donald Grayston of the Shalom Institute in Vancouver, Douglas R. Letson and Michael W. Higgins of the University of St. Jerome's College in Waterloo, Ontario, and Jacques Goulet of Mt. St. Vincent University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Grayston and Higgins were the organizers and coordinators of the first large Merton conference, *The Thomas Merton Symposium*, held at the Vancouver School of Theology from 11 to 13 May 1978. They collected and edited the papers from this symposium in *Thomas Merton: Pilgrim in Process* (Toronto: Griffin House, 1983). As mentioned, the ITMS papers by Letson and Higgins are included in this *Annual*. Michael Higgins's lecture, "Making and Remaking: The Many Masks of Thomas Merton," delivered at St. Thomas More College of the University of Saskatchewan, appeared as a separate publication and in the April 1989 issue of *The Canadian Catholic Review*. J. S. Porter's *The Thomas Merton Poems: A Caravan of Poems*, published in 1988 by Moonstone Press in Goderich, Ontario, is a collection of poems, *not* by Merton but inspired by and patterned after him. Porter's book was reviewed rather widely in Canada and is reviewed in this *Annual* by John Leax. Ross Labrie of the University of British Columbia, whose *The Art of Thomas Merton* was published some years ago by the Texas Christian University Press, discusses Merton at some length in his latest book, *The Writings of Daniel Berrigan*.

Back south of the border in the United States, several books in 1989 contained significant sections about Merton. N. S. Xavier, born in India, has a chapter, "Thomas Merton," in his *The Two Faces of Religion: A Psychiatrist's View*, in which he attempts to look at Merton from a psychoanalytical viewpoint. In a book published in 1988 but which reached the Merton Center in 1989 — Eugene Kennedy's *Tomorrow's Catholic / Yesterday's Church: The Two Cultures of American Catholicism* — there is a chapter called "Thomas Merton Died for Our Sins." Kennedy identifies Merton as a "Culture Two Catholic," one of those who sought to undergo religious experience in a creative, indeed an artistic, way. According to Kennedy,

Merton's "life was thus a model for legions of creative people who baffled the institution and who paid high prices for being originals who did not fit easily into pre-cut placements."<sup>5</sup> Thomas M. King, a Teilhard de Chardin scholar, had a new book titled *Enchantments: Religion and the Power of the Word*. In a chapter called "Merton and Aseitas," he discusses Merton's "enchantment" with that word, often used to describe the "Of Himselfness" of God. According to King, the word itself delivered Merton from thinking of himself as *aseitas* and enabled him to emerge from his selfish identity into a state where ethics became possible and God, as He should, became *aseitas*. "Thomas Merton and His Poetry," a chapter in James Laughlin's *Random Essays: Recollections of a Publisher*, falls into the reminiscence category. It is basically an account of Laughlin's contacts with Merton as publisher of all his volumes of poetry. The essay does, however, offer insight into how Laughlin thinks Merton developed as a poet. *The Catholic Counterculture in America, 1933-1962*, by James T. Fisher of Yale University, contains a chapter "Jack Kerouac and Thomas Merton, the Last Catholic Romantics" which presents Merton as a paradigmatic Catholic liberal. Fisher says however: "Merton's sophisticated resignation to authority appealed to the many Catholics who no longer reflexively followed the dictates of the church but were far from ready to risk the ostracism which might result from direct questioning of authority."<sup>6</sup> Finally, Charles J. Healey, a Jesuit priest who has written on Thomas Merton in the past, has written a book published by Alba House, *Modern Spiritual Writers: Their Legacies of Prayer*. The book is an introduction to nine writers on spirituality, including Merton.<sup>7</sup>

Two interesting catalogues of Merton exhibits appeared during 1989. *An Easter Anthology*, an exhibit devoted to religious art, Merton's drawings and photographs, and images of Merton, opened at the Owensboro Museum of Fine Art in February. The catalogue, also called *An Easter Anthology*, carried photographs of several of Merton's works and nearly all of the images of him and included a biographical reflection by Robert E. Daggy and a short essay on Merton's art by Brother Patrick Hart. Sister Therese Lentfoehr, longtime friend and correspondent of Merton's, left

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5. Eugene Kennedy, *Tomorrow's Catholics / Yesterday's Church: The Two Cultures of American Catholicism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), p. 155.

6. James Terence Fisher, *The Catholic Counterculture in America, 1933-1962* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), p. 232.

7. See, for example, Charles J. Healey, S.J., "Thomas Merton: Growth in Compassion," *American Ecclesiastical Review* 168 (November 1974), pp. 579-594 and "Thomas Merton: Spiritual Director," *Cistercian Studies* 11 (1976), pp. 228-245.



her extensive collection of Mertoniana to Columbia University when she died in 1981. Long attached to the Catholic Campus Ministry at Columbia, the collection has now (to the relief of Merton scholars) been deposited in the Rare Books and Manuscripts Division in Butler Library, a much more secure location than its former housing. The collection has been processed and catalogued and featured in an exhibit which opened 6 December 1989. A prospectus (or collection summary) called *Thomas Merton, the Poet and the Contemplative Life* has been published. It contains a foreword by Kenneth A. Lohf, an introduction by Patrick T. Lawlor, and the text of the labels which accompanied items in the exhibit. Lawlor, who processed the collection, also contributed an article to *Columbia Library Columns* about Merton's letters to his Columbia teacher, Mark Van Doren. The letters themselves are now available in *The Road to Joy*.

Merton is now included in many standard reference works. In William S. Ward's *A Literary History of Kentucky*, published by the University of Tennessee Press, Ward places Merton in his section on modern poetry. He discusses Merton primarily as a poet, basing this on the fact that when *The Seven Storey Mountain* was published in 1948, Merton was described as "a young American poet" and his published work consisted of three volumes of verse. Merton has also made the pages of *The D. A. B. — The Dictionary of American Biography*, Supplement Eight, 1966-1970. William H. Shannon wrote the entry and brings perspective to several aspects of Merton's life within the short framework of such an entry. The following paragraph, for example, sums up his involvement with social issues and his interest in non-Christian traditions.

Merton's contemplative experience explains his involvement with social issues and his dialogue with other religious traditions in the East and West. During the 1960s he became, from behind his monastery walls, a recognized leader for many in the struggle for racial justice, for world peace, and for nonviolence as a way of life. He expanded his involvement in interreligious dialogue, eager to enrich his own faith by contact with other Christian traditions as well as with Judaism and the religions of Asia. His interest in religious dialogue was not primarily ecumenical; his concern lay not so much in resolving differences in religious formulations as in discovering the fundamental unity underlying different religious traditions — namely, the unity of the religious experience. (p. 431)

Merton is also popping up in children's textbooks, usually as a one page entry giving brief details and including questions for the students about him and about monasticism. A fifth grade text from Silver Burdett & Ginn — *This is Our Faith*, by Carl J. Pfeiffer and Janaan Manternach — features such a page, "Thomas Merton — Man of Prayer," and is in use in

several parochial schools. In England (once again), Collins has published an elementary text called *Communication, Celebration, Values* which includes a page on Merton.

Speaking of younger readers (though not necessarily confined to them), Merton made the Sunday Comics in 1989 in Paul Howie's syndicated column "In Their Own Words." His 2 April column featured a "Merton word game." Clues are given to form words leading to a quotation from an unidentified Merton source, the quotation being "Happiness is diminished when we do not share it with others." Certainly this and other items — such as Gregory J. Ryan's *Munx Pond Magazine: A Collection of Humor Inspired by Thomas Merton* — can be classified as what Cooper calls "ephemeral bric-a-brac." Ryan's computer produced pamphlet, which he calls "Number One & Only" and which he has offered for sale, while it may be bric-a-brac, points up the neglected area of Merton's humor which often gets inundated by heavier analyses and it underscores something of the inexplicable appeal of Merton. Ryan includes fictional correspondence, "concrete" poems *à la* Merton, and various word games, including crossword puzzles with clues drawn from such Merton books as *The Seven Storey Mountain* and *A Vow of Conversation*.

Quotations from Merton and comments about him surface in many publications, such as a quote about Shaker chairs in *The National Geographic* (September 1989); an account of his friendship with John Howard Griffin in *American Heritage* (February 1989); a long quotation from *Love and Living*, complete with a drawing of Merton against low craggy mountains, in *Blue Marble* (November 1989); and an abridged version of Elizabeth Kristol's "The Monk from Manhattan: Thomas Merton's Tantalizing Message for Modern Catholics" in *Catholic Digest* (April 1989).

Only one major study of Merton, however, was published in the United States in 1989, that by David D. Cooper mentioned at the beginning of this essay. *Thomas Merton's Art of Denial: The Evolution of a Radical Humanist* sails some new waters in Merton studies because it approaches Merton from a more secular viewpoint than other studies and it raises several provocative questions. It is reviewed in this *Annual* by Ross Labrie.

Shorter works on Merton continued to appear in journals and periodicals, most of which were reviews of the various books by and about Merton which have been published in the late 1980s. Other work included scholarly analyses and the usual number of reminiscences and "Merton spin-offs." Four issues of *The Merton Seasonal*, published at the Thomas Merton Studies Center at Bellarmine College, carried short articles,

reviews, verse, and images of Merton. Highlights of the year included articles by Anne Page Brooks ("Job and Thomas Merton: Their Experiences of God and the Realization of Integrity") and David Kocka ("A Song of Syllables: Merton an Artist in Art"), various materials from the ITMS General Meeting or inspired by it (such as Martha Bartholomew's "Seeds for Generation: A Poem written at the ITMS General Meeting"), and a review symposium of *The Road to Joy: Letters to New and Old Friends* (Michael Casey, O.C.S.O.; Robert Grip; Jane Marie Richardson, S.L.; and Bernard Van Waes, O.H.C.).

Analysis of specific texts by Merton or the development of a theme in a particular text has not loomed large in Merton studies, but some forays into textual analysis did appear in 1989. Brother John Albert used a Merton text in his "The Christ of Thomas Merton's *Monastic Peace* and Victor A. Kramer explored one of Merton's "monastic orientation texts" in "Patterns in Thomas Merton's *Introduction to Ascetical and Mystical Theology*." Both appeared in *Cistercian Studies*, the first in the third issue and the latter in the fourth. Brent Short drew references from Merton texts to develop his "Thomas Merton on Genesis: A Way of Seeing" (*Spiritual Life*, Spring 1989). Interest in Merton's relationship with the nurse has yet to crest, but, except for review articles by Anthony T. Padovano and Paul Wilkes, no one had examined closely the so called "Nurse Poems," published in limited edition with the bland title *Eighteen Poems*. Doug Burton-Christie stuck his oar into these waters with his interesting article "Rediscovering Love's World: Thomas Merton's Love Poems and the Language of Ecstasy," *Cross Currents* (Spring 1989). Burton-Christie uses a different approach but concludes, as others have, that Merton's writing was informed and articulated by his experience. In a different watercourse, Janet S. Horne has examined Merton's writings as a form of direct communication in her "Beyond Rhetoric: Thomas Merton on Silence" in *The Speech Communication Annual* (February 1989).

Some much touched themes in Merton scholarship were in evidence also in 1989: Zen, nonviolence, prayer, self. Worthy of mention are John Dear's "Glorifying the God of Peace: The Nonviolence of Thomas Merton," *Fellowship* (December 1988); Robert Imperato's "Merton's Way of Prayer," *Living Prayer* (March-April 1989); George Kilcourse's "Personifications of the True Self in Thomas Merton's Poetry," *Cistercian Studies* (no. 2); Belden C. Lane's "Thomas Merton as Zen Clown," *Theology Today* (October 1989); and Gregory J. Ryan's "Merton, Main, and the New Monasticism," *Monastic Studies* (Christmas 1988).

Translation of Merton works into languages other than English continued, but Barry Magid at his Dim Gray Barr Press in New York paid tribute to Merton's own work as a translator into English by publishing his translation of *Dialogue about the Hidden God*, by Nicholas of Cusa. This short production, just twenty leaves, is a limited edition of 100 copies and contains a one page introduction by Magid. The first known translation of a Merton book into Finnish appeared this year. The translation of *Thoughts in Solitude* was done Pia Koskinen-Launonen, titled *Ajatuksia Yksinäisyudessa*, and published in Helsinki by Kirjanelio. A unique translation of Merton material was a cassette tape produced in Freiburg, West Germany, by Verlag Hermann Bauer. Called *Betrachteugen uber die Leben*, it consists of readings of three chapters from *No Man is an Island* with musical interludes. Horst Warning did the readings and the three chapters (translated into German) are "Love Can Be Kept Only by Being Given Away," "The Wind blows where It Pleases," and "The Measure of Charity." Early in the year the translation of Merton's *Love and Living* into German (*Lieben und Leben*), translated by Christ Broermann and published by Benziger Verlag in Zurich, appeared.

Work continued outside the United States in studies such as Zoltan Dukai's "Thomas Merton: Nemzetkozi Tarsasag," *Agape* 2 (1989) [published in Hungarian in Novi Sad, Yugoslavia]; Yasuo Kikama's "Tomasu Ma-aton no Shu-uhén," *Journal of Kobe Kaisei Joshi Daigaku* 27 (December 1988); Cyrus Lee's "Merton and Chinese Wisdom," *Chinese Culture* 30 (June 1989); Vivian Ligo's dissertation, "The Language of Paradox in the Life and Writings of Thomas Merton" (done at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium); and Uwe Schroeder's "Kontemplation in einer Welt des Umbruchs: Thomas Merton gegen die Tauschungen im kontemplativen Leben," *Erbe und Auftrag* 65 (August 1989).

Undoubtedly the largest controversy of the year was engendered by George J. Evans, an exclaustated Cistercian, whose article, "Merton: Trappist Monk or 'Monastic Sport'?", appeared in the 22 September issue of *The National Catholic Reporter*. Evans concluded that Merton was a "sarabite" who had "a pernicious effect on traditional Trappist life."<sup>8</sup> The article prompted a minor tsunami of response in letters to the editor by George Darling, Joseph A. Eisenberg, Robert Grip, Robert Hale, Terrence G. Kardong, Mary Luke Tobin, and Frank X. Tuoti (these appeared under the title

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8. George J. Evans, O.C.S.O., "Merton: Trappist Monk or 'Monastic Sport'?", *National Catholic Reporter* 25 (22 September 1989), p. 17.

“Merton Melange” in the 13 October issue). Several letters were not printed. The response centered on the fact that the writers did not share Evans’s view of Merton’s negative influence on monasticism in general and Trappist life in particular, but also on the fact that it seemed inappropriate that a monk who had found various ways of living away from his monastery should accuse Merton (who did not do so though he may have considered and even planned at times to do so) of sarabism. So, all writing did not adulate Merton, but Evans’s remarks showed that a certain kind of negative criticism can cause immediate and solid defense.

One other publication reflected a growing trend, the desexing of language — and this trend has both its defenders and detractors, particularly in regard to Merton’s writings. Some feel that these writings, all completed by the end of 1968 and long before inclusive language became an issue, should be allowed to stand as he wrote them. Others feel that some texts, especially the more popular ones, should be revised to eliminate any gender references. In any case, Pax Christi USA in Erie, Pennsylvania, issued a desexed selection of texts from *Thomas Merton on Peace* (retitled *The Nonviolent Alternative* in the 1976 edition). This fifty-two page pamphlet is called *Words of Peace: Thomas Merton on Nonviolence* and the introduction says in part: “The manuscripts in this publication have been adapted to reflect gender inclusive language . . . .”

1989 — it was not an astonishing year, but it was an interesting one. The continuing waves of work on Merton, of drawings and paintings of him, of poetry written to and for him, of conferences and meetings, to quote David Cooper once again “surely [stand] as a testament to Thomas Merton’s durable and enduring message for our increasingly confused and troubled era” (Cooper, p. ix).